

Vol. III
of X

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V FOR VENDETTA

By Alan Moore
and David Lloyd



Suggested
For Mature
Readers





V FOR VENDETTA

By Alan Moore and David Lloyd

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AUTOPSY ROOM ▶



AUTOPSY ROOM ▶







THERE



THE WOUND'S BEEN CLEARED
UP A LITTLE, ERIC, BUT YOU
CAN SEE THAT IT WAS A
FAIRLY RAGGED EDGE.

SO YOU'RE RIGHT, IT ISN'T A KNIFE
WOUND IT LOOKS LIKE SOME-
THING'S BEEN PUNCHED
THROUGH THE SKIN WITH
INCREDIBLE FORCE.

MMH



AHH, WELL, THANKS FOR
THE HELP, DELIA. ME AND
THE LAD ARE SITTING
UP WITH THIS CASE
TONIGHT. YOU'VE GIVEN
US SOMETHING ELSE
TO CHEW OVER.

SOUNDS
LIKE YOU'VE ALREADY
BITTEN OFF ENOUGH
TO RUIN YOUR CHRISTMAS.
DIDN'T DOMINIC TELL ME
THAT YOU WERE GOING TO
CONSULT FATE?



MM, THE LEADER'S
AUTHORIZED AN
EXTENSION LINK FOR
ME. THINGS MUST BE
DESPERATE. HE'S
USUALLY FUNNY
ABOUT OTHER
PEOPLE USING
FATE...



OOH, DELIA.
BEFORE I
FORGET...



CAN YOU TELL US ANY-
THING ABOUT THIS? WE
FOUND TWO OF THEM...
ONE IN THE CARRIAGE WHEN HE
GRABBED LEWIS
PROTHERO...

THE OTHER IN
THE BISHOP'S
ROOM...

IT'S A
VIOLET CARSON.
I'D HEARD THAT STRAIN
HAD DIED SINCE THE WAR.
THOUGHT A BOTANIST MIGHT
BE ABLE TO SHED SOME
LIGHT ON IT...



WHY, YES, YES OF
COURSE, I'M KNOCK-
ING OFF IN A
FEW MINUTES,
BLT...

PERHAPS
I COULD TAKE
IT HOME...

MAGIC
SEE YOU TO-
MORROW THEN,
DELIA. 'BYE



'BYE



IT'S WRONG. Y

Chapter Nine

VIOLENCE



Y, IT'S ME AS WELL. I'M INVOLVED. YOU INVOLVED ME

Y, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE GOING TO KILL HIM!



KILLING'S WRONG

ISN'T IT?



WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME?

AND AS FOR ME INVOLVING YOU, I SEEM TO REMEMBER THAT YOU WERE THE ONE ANXIOUS TO MAKE A DEAL.



I DIDN'T KNOW THAT YOU WERE GOING TO

YOU WERE THE ONE WHO

OH CHRIST, Y...

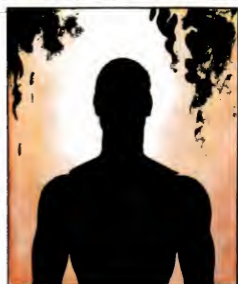


THERE IS MORE BEHIND AND INSIDE Y THAN ANY OF US HAD SUSPECTED. NOT WHO, BUT WHAT WHAT IS SHE."

YOU'LL LEARN, EYEV.







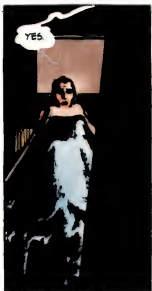


THE SHADOW GALLERY: "LET'S DIG AN ENORMOUS CASTLE!" CRIED MOON-FACE "THEN WE CAN ALL SIT ON THE TOP OF IT WHEN THE SEA COMES IN."

"WE CAN'T," SAID SILKY, SUDDENLY LOOKING SAD "WHY NOT? WHY NOT?" CRIED JO IN SURPRISE, "ISN'T THIS THE LAND OF DO-AS-YOU-PLEASE?"

"YES," SAID SILKY "BUT IT'S TIME WE WENT BACK TO THE FARAWAY TREE THIS LAND WILL SOON BE MOVING ON-- AND NICE AS IT IS, WE DON'T WANT TO LIVE HERE FOREVER."

"GRACIOUS NO," SAID JO, "OUR MOTHER AND FATHER COULDN'T POSSIBLY DO WITHOUT US."



ROSES

YOU'VE COME TO KILL ME

IT'S YOU, ISN'T IT? YOU'VE COME...

YES

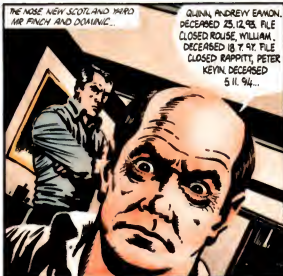
OH THANK GOD

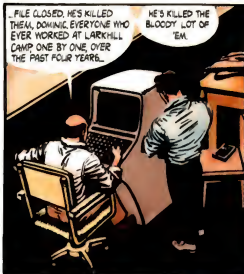
THANK GOD



DECEMBER 23RD, 1997 KNIGHTSBRIDGE
MR. AND MRS. ALMOND

DEREK?
WHAT?





FILE CLOSED. HE'S KILLED THEM, DOMINIC. EVERYONE WHO EVER WORKED AT LARKHILL CAMP, ONE BY ONE, OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS...

HE'S KILLED THE BLOODY LOT OF 'EM.



BUT I DON'T KNOW THAT SIR. SOME OF THEM COULD BE ACCIDENTAL DEATHS... NATURAL DEATHS...

OR SOMETHING THAT LOOKS VERY MUCH LIKE NATURAL DEATH. FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, DOMINIC, LOOK AT IT! WE HAD IT ALL WRONG.



WE THOUGHT HE APPEARED OUT OF THE BLUE TWO MONTHS AGO.

AND ALL THIS TIME. OH GOD. ALL THOSE PEOPLE. THAT'S MONSTROUS. THAT'S PURE BLOODY EVIL.



THIS IS A LIST OF ALL THE MEN AT LARKHILL. WERE THERE ANY WOMEN?

I DON'T KNOW. CHECK IT WITH FATE.



HE WAS AT LARKHILL. HE MUST HAVE BEEN. AND NOW EVERYBODY WHO COULD HAVE TOLD US ANYTHING.

OH CHRIST, MR FINCH. LOOK AT THIS.



DELIA, I WAS TALKING TO HER A COUPLE OF HOURS AGO. I GAVE HER THAT ROSE TO LOOK AT...

PACK #11 ON DISK

BEGIN

.....
RESTRICTED ACCESS CODE 007
.....

REC/BIR SIZE 5, 807 720

2566 SARRIPOLE, DR DELIA ANNE LARKHILL RES (MILITARY CAMP) (1992-1995)

667 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT PATHOLOGIST

668 FBI DEPT OF INVESTIGATIONS AA(1855/9272)

END



PHONE HER, DOMINIC, AND THEN PHONE ALMOND

I'M TRYING THE DOCTOR'S LINE'S ENGAGED



ALL RIGHT PHONE ALMOND ANYWAY CODENAME Y'S MADE HIS FIRST AND LAST COCK UP. HE COULDN'T KNOW THAT YOU'D COOK THE LARKHILL CONNECTION BEFORE HE GOT TO DELIA.

THIS TIME WE'LL BE WAITING FOR HIM



PLASTIDY, DR DELIA SARRIDGE.

ARE YOU AFRAID?



NO. I THOUGHT I WOULD BE BUT I'M NOT. I'M RELIEVED. OH GOD. ALL THESE YEARS. ALL THIS WAITING.

YOU SEE, I ALWAYS KNEW YOU'D COME BACK.



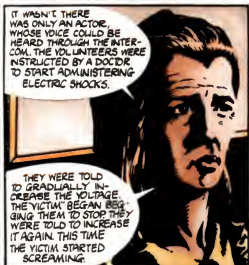
WHEN I SAW YOU THAT NIGHT. THE NIGHT YOU ESCAPED. YOU WERE STANDING AGAINST THE FLAMES. YOU TURNED AND YOU LOOKED STRAIGHT AT ME.

I KNEW THEN THAT ONE DAY YOU'D COME LOOKING FOR ME, THAT YOU'D FIND ME.



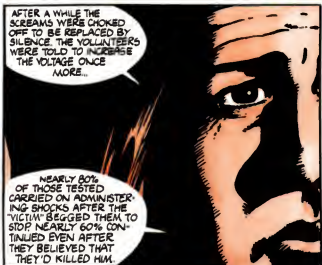
WHAT. WHAT WE DID THAT I DID AT LARKHILL. THAT TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE. IT'S BEEN WITH ME FOR SO LONG. THAT I COULD DO THINGS LIKE THAT.

I HEARD OF AN EXPERIMENT ONCE, ONE THE AMERICANS DID. THEY HAD VOLUNTEERS WORKING A SHOCK GENERATOR. THE VOLUNTEERS WERE TOLD THAT IT WAS WIRED TO A PATIENT IN AN ADDJONING ROOM.



IT WASN'T THERE WAS ONLY AN ACTOR, WHOSE VOICE COULD BE HEARD THROUGH THE INTER-COM. THE VOLUNTEERS WERE INSTRUCTED BY A DOCTOR TO START ADMINISTERING ELECTRIC SHOCKS.

THEY WERE TOLD TO GRADUALLY INCREASE THE VOLTAGE. THE VICTIM BEGAN BEGGING THEM TO STOP. THEY WERE TOLD TO INCREASE IT AGAIN. THIS TIME THE VICTIM STARTED SCREAMING.



AFTER A WHILE THE SCREAMS WERE CHOKED OFF TO BE REPLACED BY SILENCE. THE VOLUNTEERS WERE TOLD TO INCREASE THE VOLTAGE ONCE MORE...

NEARLY 80% OF THOSE TESTED CARRIED ON ADMINISTERING SHOCKS AFTER THE VICTIM BEGGED THEM TO STOP. NEARLY 60% CONTINUED EVEN AFTER THEY BELIEVED THAT THEY'D KILLED HIM.



THEY WERE ORDINARY PEOPLE, AND THEY WERE PREPARED TO TORTURE A STRANGER TO DEATH. JUST BECAUSE THEY WERE TOLD TO BY SOMEONE IN AUTHORITY.

SOME OF THEM SAID THEY'D EVEN ENJOYED IT. I THINK I ENJOYED WHAT I DID AT THE TIME. PEOPLE ARE STUPID AND EVIL. THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH US.

SOME HIDEOUS PLAY...



WE DESERVE TO BE CULLED.

WE DESERVE IT...

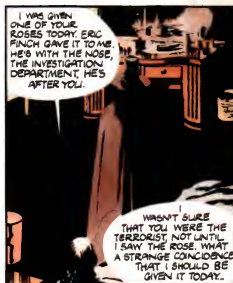


KNIGHTSBRIDGE.

HELLO? YES, ALMOND SPEAKING.

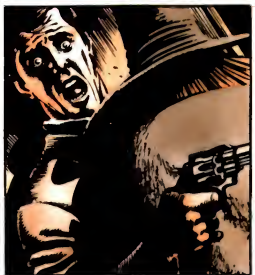
YEAH.

YOU HAVE? HOW DID YOU?











MR. FINCH... ER... SOMEBODY'S GONE TO TELL MRS. ALMOND, AND, UH...

ER, IS THERE ANYTHING.

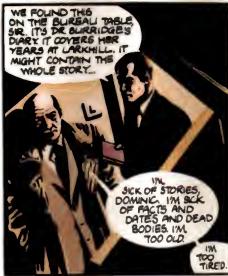


I'LL SEE HIM DEAD FOR THIS, DOMINIC.

SHE WAS A GOOD WOMAN. SHE WORKED ALL HOURS AS A DOCTOR. BEFORE SHE STARTED IN PATHOLOGY SHE CARED ABOUT PEOPLE.

I'VE SEEN HER TREATING LITTLE KIDS WHO...

BY CHRIST, DOMINIC, I'LL SEE HIM DEAD FOR THIS.



WE FOUND THIS ON THE BURIAL TABLE, SIR. IT'S DR. BURRIDGE'S DIARY. IT COVERS HER YEARS AT LARKHILL... IT MIGHT CONTAIN THE WHOLE STORY...

I'M SICK OF STORIES, DOMINIC. I'M SICK OF FACTS AND DATES AND DEAD BODIES. I'M TOO OLD.

I'M TOO TIRED.





IT'S A
VENDITTA,
LEADER.

DECEMBER 26TH, 1997. 10 58 PM.
MR. FINCH REPORTS.

Chapter Eleven
THE VORTEX

AT AROUND TEN O'CLOCK
LAST NIGHT, CODENAME
"V" ENTERED THE HOME
OF PATHOLOGIST DR.
DELIA BURRIDGE AND
INJECTED HER WITH AN
AS-YET UNIDENTIFIED
POISON. DR. BURRIDGE
IS DEAD.

BEFORE HE COULD LEAVE
THE PREMISES, CODENAME
"V" WAS SURPRISED BY THE
ARRIVAL OF MR. ALMOND.
MR. ALMOND WAS ARMED
WITH A REVOLVER.

APPARENTLY HE
HAD FORGOTTEN TO
LOAD IT. CODENAME
"V" STRUCK MR ALMOND
WITH AN EDGED
IMPLEMENT.
PROBABLY A KNIFE.

IT IS
POSSIBLE THAT HE
INJECTED HER WHILE
SHE SLEPT. THERE
WAS NO SIGN OF A
STRUGGLE.

MR.
ALMOND IS
ALSO DEAD.

MR. ALMOND WAS VISITING THE DOCTOR
TO WARN HER THAT MY DEPARTMENT HAD
ESTABLISHED A LINK BETWEEN THE
ABDUCTION OF LEWIS PROTHERO AND
THE KILLING OF BISHOP LULLIMAN.

BOTH OF THEM HAD
BEEN EMPLOYED AT
LARKHILL RESETTLEMENT
CAMP DURING 1982 AND '83.
SO HAD DR. BURRIDGE.
WE TRIED TO WARN HER.

WE WERE
TOO LATE.

AFTERWARDS, HOWEVER,
WE DID FIND THE DOCTOR'S
DIARY. IT'S A FIVE-YEAR DIARY
AND IT DEALS PARTICULARLY
WITH HER TIME AT LARK-
HILL. SINCE THIS MORNING
I'VE READ IT SEVEN
TIMES.

... AND
I STILL DON'T
KNOW WHO
CODENAME "V" IS.

... BUT I THINK
I KNOW WHAT
HE IS.

I'VE TAKEN KEY EXCERPTS FROM THE DIARY, BALANCED THEM AGAINST MY OWN FINDINGS AND PLACED THEM IN ORDER. THE STORY THAT EMERGES IS, FRANKLY, INCREDIBLE...



IT BEGINS ON APRIL 30TH, 1993. I'LL READ IT TO YOU.

"I ARRIVED AT LARKHILL THIS MORNING. MY DRIVER WAS A MAN NAMED GOSLING. HE DIDN'T SAY A WORD TO ME ALL THE WAY FROM ANDOVER."



"GOD, THIS PLACE IS MISERABLE."

"I MET COMMANDER PROTHERO WHO I'M AFRAID I FIND RATHER VULGAR AND UNPLEASANT. HE PROMISED TO SHOW ME MY RESEARCH STOCK ONCE I'D SETTLED IN, AND DID SO THIS AFTERNOON."



"THEY'RE A POOR BUNCH. PROTHERO TELLS ME THAT THEIR RABITS ARE FILTHY. NONE OF THEM WILL BE ANY USE TO ME IF I DON'T GET TO WORK ON THEM SOON."

"MAY 17th: ALMOST FINISHED THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE SCHEDULES FOR MY PROJECT. VERY EXCITED ABOUT IT SO FAR."

"HORMONE RESEARCH IS ALMOST USELESS WHEN RATS OR RABBITS ARE USED, AND THIS IS A HEAVEN-SENT OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN SOMETHING POSITIVE. I START NEXT WEEK. ALL BEING WELL."

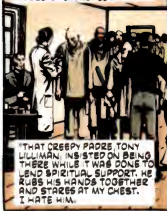


"MAY 23rd: PROTHERO HAS PICKED THE SUBJECTS... FOUR DOZEN OF THEM, AND I'VE GOT TO INSPECT THEM THIS AFTERNOON. THEY'RE SO WEAK AND PATHETIC YOU FIND YOURSELF HATING THEM."



"THEY DON'T FIGHT OR STRUGGLE AGAINST DEATH. THEY JUST STARE AT YOU WITH WEAK EYES. THEY MAKE ME WANT TO BE SICK, PHYSICALLY. THEY'RE HARDLY HUMAN."

"JUNE 5th: WELL, WE DID IT. ALL FOUR DOZEN OF THEM GOT A SHOT OF BATCH 5, WHICH IS THE PITUIZIN/PINEARIN MIXTURE. IT'S TOO EARLY FOR ANY RESULTS YET, REALLY."



"THAT CREEPY PADRE, TONY LULLIMAN, INSISTED ON BEING THERE WHILE IT WAS DONE TO LEND SPIRITUAL SUPPORT. HE RUBS HIS HANDS TOGETHER AND STARES AT MY CHEST. I HATE HIM."

"JUNE THE NINTH."

"OF THE ORIGINAL FOUR DOZEN, OVER SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT ARE DEAD NOW."



"OUT OF THE TEN THAT ARE LEFT, I DOUBT THAT THREE WILL SURVIVE THE NIGHT. ONE OF THE BLACKS, DONALD CRANE, IS IN PARTICULARLY BAD CONDITION."



"HE IS DELIRIOUS ALL THE TIME, AND IMAGINES HE IS IN TRENCHTOWN, JAMAICA. HE HAS STARTED TO DEVELOP FOUR EXTRA NIPPLES, AND HIS GEN-ERATIVE ORGANS HAVE ATROPHIED."

"STRANGELY, THERE ARE NO CLEAR PATTERNS EMERGING AS TO WHICH GROUP SUCCEEDS QUICKEST. IF ANYTHING, THE WOMEN ARE SLIGHTLY MORE RESISTANT THAN THE MEN, ESPECIALLY THE BLACK WOMEN."



"RITA BOYD, THE LESBIAN, DIED AT TEA-TIME. DURING THE AUTOPSY WE FOUND FOUR TINY VESTIGIAL FINGERS FORMING WITHIN THE Calf OF HER LEG."

"JUNE IS ONLY FIVE LEFT NOW. TWO MEN AND THREE WOMEN, WHICH TENDS TO CONTRADICT MY ENTRY OF THE 9TH OF JUNE. WE'VE HOUSED THEM IN INDIVIDUAL CUBICLES AT THE MEDICAL BLOCK.



"THE MAN IN ROOM 3 IS A REALLY FASCINATING CASE.

"PHYSICALLY, THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANYTHING WRONG WITH HIM. NO CELLULAR ANOMALIES, NOTHING.



"BUT HE'S QUITE INSANE. BATCH 5 SEEMS TO HAVE BROUGHT ON SOME KIND OF PSYCHOTIC BREAK-DOWN.

"STRANGELY, HE'S DEVELOPED ONE OF THOSE CURIOUS SIDE EFFECTS WHICH SEEM TO AFFLICT CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF SCHIZOPHRENIC:



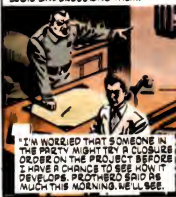
"HIS PERSONALITY HAS BECOME TOTALLY MAGNETIC. HE SAYS VERY LITTLE... BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE WAY HE LOOKS AT YOU.

"HE LOOKED AT ME TODAY AS IF I WERE SOME SORT OF INSECT. HE LOOKED AT ME AS IF HE FELT SORRY FOR ME.



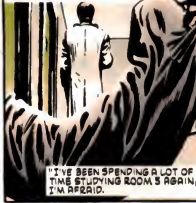
"HIS FACE IS VERY UGLY. I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT ALL EVENING.

"I THINK HIS BEHAVIOR PATTERNS ARE WHAT INTEREST ME. THEY'RE UTTERLY IRRATIONAL, BUT THEY SEEM TO HAVE A CERTAIN DERANGED LOGIC UNDERSCORING THEM.



"I'M WORRIED THAT SOMEONE IN THE PARTY MIGHT TRY A CLOSURE ORDER ON THE PROJECT BEFORE I HAVE A CHANCE TO SEE HOW IT DEVELOPS. PROTHERO SAID AS MUCH THIS MORNING. WE'LL SEE.

"JULY 12th: PRATEL, THE ASIAN IN CUBICLE THREE, DIED TODAY. HIS LIVER HAD CEASED FUNCTIONING. HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO OPEN HIM UP AND FIND OUT WHY.



"I'VE BEEN SPENDING A LOT OF TIME STUDYING ROOM 5 AGAIN. I'M AFRAID.

"I'M GLAD WE LET HIM HAVE A GO AT THE GARDENING PROJECT. PROTHERO WAS RELUCTANT AT FIRST. I SUPPOSE IT'S BECAUSE WITH THE FOOD SHORTAGE, THESE PLACES HAVE TO BE SELF-SUPPORTING.



"HE'S DELIGHTED NOW. THE FAT TOAD. ROOM FIVE'S TURNED OUT TO BE A GENIUS AT GARDENING.

"HE'S SORTED OUT THE WHITEFLY AND IT LOOKS LIKE BEING A GOOD YIELD.

"AUG 7th: THE CROP PRODUCTION HAS ALMOST DOUBLED. PROTHERO'S LETTING ROOM FIVE ORDER SOME GARDEN SUPPLIES AND HE'S EVEN GIVEN HIM A PATCH TO GROW FLOWERS ON.



"HE GROWS ROSES. BEAUTIFUL ROSES. THE WOMAN IN ROOM ONE DIED THIS MORNING. THE SKIN ON HER FACE AND NECK WAS LIKE POLYTHENE.

"SEPTEMBER 16th. GARDEN DOESN'T REQUIRE MUCH WORK THIS TIME OF YEAR. ROOM FIVE WANTS TO HELP WITH THE DECORATING IN THE STAFF QUARTERS.



"PROTHERO WILL TAKE SOME PERSUADING. HE'S STILL A LITTLE DISTURBED BY WHAT FIVE DID WITH THE AMMONIA-BASED FERTILISER THAT HE ORDERED.

"IT'S ARRANGED IN PILES AROUND HIS CELL. IT MAKES A KIND OF GEOMETRIC SHAPE. HE SITS MOTIONLESS FOR HOURS IN THE CENTRE OF IT. THE AMMONIA STENCH IS TERRIBLE.

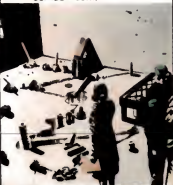


"SEPTEMBER 29TH: PROTHERO ON MY BACK ABOUT FIVE'S GREASE SOLVENT. HE ORDERED FOURTEEN GALLONS OF IT AND THEN SWIPES HALF TO DECORATE HIS CELL. PROTHERO PICKS HIS NOSE.



"THE PATTERNS OF SOLVENT AND FERTILISER ON THE FLOOR OF FIVE'S CUBICLE ARE BECOMING SO INTRICATE, I'VE GOT TO FOLLOW THIS OBSESSION TO THE END. IT MIGHT BE A NEW SYNDROME.

"NOV 5th: HIS CUBICLE IS COVERED WITH SO MUCH JUNK. THE AMMONIA SMELLS TERRIBLE AND THERE IS A SORT OF SWIMMING POOL SMELL TOO. LORD KNOWS WHERE THAT COMES FROM.



"I'M SURE THAT IN HIS MIND ALL THIS MAKES PERFECT SENSE. I'M SURE OF IT."

"THE NEXT ENTRY I WANT TO READ WAS MADE ON DECEMBER 24TH, 1993, AND IT REFERS TO THE EVENTS OF THE PREVIOUS DAY.



IT STARTS WITH THE WORDS 'HE LOOKED AT,' WHICH ARE CROSSED OUT. THEN IT SAYS 'NO, CAN'T WRITE ABOUT IT YET, CAN'T HOLD.' AND THEN ANOTHER GAP.

WHEN IT RESUMES, IT'S IN A DIFFERENT COLORED INK...



"I WAS IN THE MESS. IT WAS ABOUT HALF PAST TEN WHEN WE HEARD THE FIRST EXPLOSION.



"WE RAN TO THE DOOR TO SEE. LUCKILY I WAS RIGHT AT THE BACK.

"THE ONES AT THE FRONT RAN STRAIGHT INTO THE GAS. IT WAS HORRIBLE.



"A FEW OF US WENT OUT THROUGH THE REAR DOOR TO AVOID THE GAS. YOU COULD HEAR PEOPLE SCREAMING EVERYWHERE.



"MEN SCREAMING. I HATE THAT. I HATE THE SOUND OF MEN SCREAMING.

"IN THE CENTRE OF THE CAMP, EVERYTHING WAS ON FIRE. WHILE WE WERE TRYING TO WORK OUT WHAT WAS GOING ON, THE OVENS EXPLODED.



"I RAN, BUT EVERYONE WAS RUNNING, AND ALL IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS. IT WAS HORRIBLE.



"IT WAS THE MAN IN ROOM FIVE, WHO HAD GOT OUT, WHO HAD GOT AWAY, HE BLEW IT UP. HE KILLED ...



"I COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN... THE AMMONIA, THE GREASE SOLVENT AND ALL THE OTHER STUFF, HE'D BEEN MAKING THINGS WITH THEM.



"MUSTARD GAS ...



"...AND NAPALM.



"AND IN THE YARD, I SAW HIM. HE HAD THE FLAMES BEHIND HIM. HE WAS NAKED ...



"HE LOOKED AT ME.



"AS IF I WERE AN INSECT, OR GOD, AS IF I WERE SOMETHING MOUNTED ON A SLIDE.

"HE LOOKED AT ME.

"HE'S GONE. THE CAMP IS BEING CLOSED. NOBODY IS TALKING ABOUT IT. NOBODY KNOWS WHERE HE'S GONE."

THAT'S THE LAST ENTRY UNTIL SIX MONTHS LATER WHEN DR. SURRIDGE IS RESTED AND BACK IN LONDON.

END OF STORY.

EXCEPT THAT IT WASN'T. WAS IT? WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN IN ROOM FIVE? WHAT DID HE DO IN THE FOUR YEARS FOLLOWING HIS ESCAPE FROM LARKHILL?

"HOW DID HE BECOME CODE-NAME 'V'?"

"SOME OF THAT FOUR YEARS WAS PERHAPS SPENT IN LAYING THE ELABORATE GROUNDWORK FOR HIS CURRENT MANOEUVRES. MAYBE IN PREPARING A BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR HIMSELF..."



"BETWEEN 1993 AND 1997, OVER FORTY PEOPLE WHO WERE PREVIOUSLY AT LARKHILL MET WITH WHAT WERE BELIEVED TO BE ACCIDENTAL DEATHS. EVENTUALLY, ONLY THREE REMAINED."



"HE ABDUCTED LEWIS PROTHERO, THE CAMP COMMANDER WHO HAD CHOSEN HIM TO RECEIVE BATCH 5. THE PREPARATION THAT HAD DESTROYED HIS MIND."



"PROTHERO IS NOW INCURABLY INSANE."



"HE VISITED BISHOP LILLIMAN AND MADE HIM SWALLOW A POISONED COMMUNION WAFER. THAT'S A DREADFUL, DEGRADING WAY FOR A MAN LIKE THAT TO DIE."



"BUT YOU CAN SEE A SORT OF BLACK POETRY THERE. CAN'T YOU? A SORT OF GALLONS HUMOUR? I DUNNO. PERHAPS YOU CAN'T."

"FINALLY, THERE IS DR. DELIA SURRIDGE, WHO CODENAME 'V' VISITED THIS MORNING, FOUR YEARS TO THE DAY AFTER ESCAPING LARKHILL. SHE WAS A GOOD WOMAN, A HUMANE WOMAN. BUT THEN I READ THIS DIRTY AND..."



"I DON'T KNOW, I DON'T KNOW. SHE'S DEAD NOW."

"HER AND EVERYBODY ELSE WHO WORKED AT LARKHILL. HER AND EVERYBODY ELSE WHO COULD HAVE IDENTIFIED HIM."



"YOU SEE, THERE ARE TWO POSSIBLE MOTIVES HERE. NOT ONE."

"THE FIRST MOTIVE IS REVENGE. HE ESCAPES FROM LARKHILL AND VOWS TO GET EVEN WITH HIS TORMENTORS. THE PARLIAMENT BOMBING AND THE OTHER STUFF & JUST A SMOKESCREEN."



"THE WHOLE EXERCISE WAS AN ELABORATE, CHILLING VENDETTA."

"THAT'S THE EXPLANATION THAT I FIND MOST REASSURING, FUNNILY ENOUGH."



"BECAUSE THAT MEANS HE'S FINISHED NOW. THAT MEANS IT'S OVER."

"THE SECOND MOTIVE IS MORE SINISTER. LIKE I SAID, EVERYONE WHO COULD HAVE IDENTIFIED HIM IS NOW DEAD."



"WHAT IF HE'S JUST BEEN CLEARING THE GROUND?"

"WHAT IF HE'S PLANNING SOMETHING ELSE?"



"YOU SEE, THIS DIARY THAT WE FOUND... IT WAS IN FULL VIEW ON THE DOCTOR'S WRITING BUREAU. WE DIDN'T HAVE TO SEARCH FOR IT."

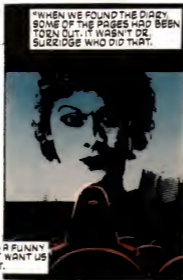


"HE LEFT IT THERE. I'M SURE OF IT. HE WANTED US TO FIND IT. HE WANTED US TO KNOW THE STORY."



"BUT... AND HERE'S A FUNNY THING... HE DIDN'T WANT US TO KNOW ALL OF IT."

"WHEN WE FOUND THE DIARY, SOME OF THE PAGES HAD BEEN TORN OUT. IT WASN'T DR. SURRIDGE WHO DID THAT."



"WHAT WAS ON THE MISSING PAGES, EH? HIS NAME? HIS AGE? WHETHER HE WAS JEWISH, OR HOMOSEXUAL, OR BLACK OR WHITE?"



"AND FURTHERMORE, IF HIS VENDETTA IS REALLY OVER..."

"WHY DID HE CARE WHETHER WE KNEW OR NOT?"

"HE'S PLAYING GAMES WITH US. HE'S PLAYING GAMES THAT ARE JUST AS ELABORATE AS THE DESIGN ON THE FLOOR OF ROOM FIVE, AS ELABORATE AND AS MAD..."

"...AND AS DEADLY."

YOU SEE, YOU DEAL WITH SOMETHING LIKE THIS... A SCHEME THAT'S AS INGENUOUS AS IT IS IRRATIONAL, AND IT'S LIKE WALKING ON QUICK-BAND! YOU GET SLOWLY SUCKED INTO IT...

I MEAN, FATE DOESN'T HAVE ANY RECORDS OF WHAT HAPPENED AT LARKHILL. WE DIDN'T KEEP RECORDS OF WHAT WENT ON AT ANY OF THE CAMPS. I SUPPOSE WE WERE BEING CAUTIOUS.

BUT LOOK... FOR ALL WE KNOW, THIS DIARY COULD BE A COMPLETE AND LITTLER PRAKE. CODENAME "V" COULD HAVE WRITTEN IT HIMSELF.

HE MIGHT NEVER HAVE BEEN AT LARKHILL AT ALL. DO YOU SEE? IT COULD ALL BE ANOTHER SMOKE-SCREEN, A FALSE TRAIL, ANOTHER COVER STORY...

MR. FINCH, CAN YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT ANYONE WOULD KILL OVER FIFTY PEOPLE FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN TO PROVIDE HIMSELF WITH A COVER STORY?

THE VERY IDEA IS...

...MADNESS.

AH YES.

I SEE...

VERY WELL, I THINK THAT WILL BE ALL, MR. FINCH. ENGLAND PREVAILS.

OH, AND MR. FINCH?

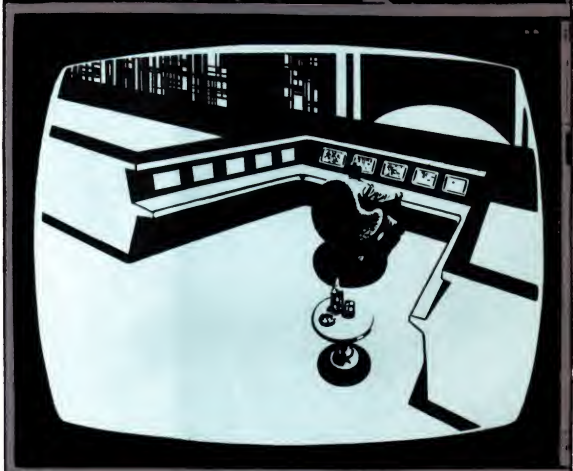
LEADER?

HAPPY CHRISTMAS.

End of
Volume One







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